

**Harrisonburg Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Advisory Committee  
Meeting Summary**

January 11, 2010 – 5:30pm-6:30pm  
409 S. Main St.

Attendance: Thanh Dang, Adam Fletcher, Cindy Reeves, Sgt. William Keller, Len Van Wyk, Ben Wyse,  
Paul Johnston

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Draft Plan & Projects List

Copies of the draft plan and projects list were distributed and three maps of each bicycle and pedestrian facilities were laid out for review and discussion.

Mr. Van Wyk inquired about the shared use path shown on the map paralleling Mt. Clinton Pike. It was discussed that the shared use path was an alternative to requests to stripe bicycle lanes on Mt. Clinton Pike, an opportunity to get a facility separated from the roadway, and also an opportunity to connect with Rockingham County's Technology Park. Committee members discussed the cost differences and timeline of construction a shared use path versus reducing lane miles on Mt. Clinton Pike and striping new bicycle lanes. Discussed were reduction of road maintenance funding from VDOT for reduced lane miles, the long term vision for Mt. Clinton Pike as an east to west connection between west city limits to Old Furnace Rd (reference Street Improvement Plan in Comprehensive Plan), users of a shared use path versus bicycle lanes, potential and unknown developments in the area, impact on economic development of the area, and unknown, distant timeline for development in the area that would provide opportunity for the construction of a shared use path.

Mr. Wyse and Mr. Johnston suggested that Vine St. and Acorn Dr. should also be designated as having bicycle lanes in the plan. It was discussed that the long term vision for Vine St. was to become a four lane facility, and noted that the timeline for that change is unknown. Ms. Dang noted that a bicycle lane can be shown as desired on these streets, but if added into the plan the cross sections of these streets may still remain unknown. Committee members agreed to show in the Plan that bicycle lanes were desired along these corridors. Ms. Dang will continue this discussion with Public Works and city staff.

Committee members inquired about the bicycle lanes on South Ave. Ms. Dang noted that property owners had been notified in November 2008 about the Safe Routes to School project, but that no additional follow up has been made since then. Proposed for South Ave. are bicycle lanes and on street parking on one side only. It has not yet been determined which side of the street on street parking will remain. Letters to property owners on South Ave. will be sent out this Spring to notify them of the changes. Sidewalk construction will begin in late-Spring and is anticipated to be completed in November.

Ms. Reeves asked about the Safe Routes to School program and kids riding on sidewalks. She noted that many parents may prefer their children to ride on the sidewalks, even if a bicycle lane were provided. It was noted that it is generally safer for bicyclists to ride on the street and not the sidewalks because of potential conflicts/accidents with driveways. However, committee members anticipate that a number of parents will continue to instruct their children to ride their bikes on the sidewalk. Committee members discussed that the school should continue to encourage parents to bike and walk to school with their

kids, or encourage Walking School Buses or Bike Trains. Additionally, like Waterman Elementary School, Keister should integrate bicycle safety education into its curriculum to encourage safe bicycling habits.

Committee members discussed the City's Capital Projects line item for bicycle facilities and it was noted that about \$30-40,000 was put into the line item each year and that unspent dollars accumulate overtime. It was noted that the engineers estimate for the S. Main St. and Country Club Rd. railroad crossing improvements was \$87,000 and that the engineers estimate for the Bluestone Trail Phase I was over \$500,000. Mr. Johnston inquired how the amount appropriated by City Council each year compared to the City's overall transportation budget. Staff members present could not answer this question and Ms. Dang offered to inquire with other staff persons after the meeting. A discussion was had about the Virginia Department of Transportation's commitment to spend 2% of its paving maintenance budget in each district towards improving shoulders, etc. for bicycle facilities.

Mr. Johnston noted that the City should be proactive and invest its money early on bicycle facilities.

Ms. Reeves asked how the Plan will help the City decide where to spend its money. Ms. Dang noted that the Plan indicates the community's priority ranking for each facility and provides support for grant applications made to fund pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements. Mr. Fletcher noted that the City's Design & Construction Standards Manual requires that developers provide the easements along the frontage of their properties for bicycle facilities or within their properties for shared use paths as if indicated in the Bicycle Plan. Developers may also be responsible for constructing the improvements needed.

Mr. Van Wyk noted that much of the discussion and interest of committee members present were focused on bicycle needs. He inquired whether pedestrian needs were equally represented and addressed in the Plan. Ms. Dang stated that she believed that pedestrian needs were equally represented, that a lot of feedback on pedestrian needs (sidewalks, pedestrian signals, etc) was submitted during the public input period in September and October 2009. Ms. Dang also noted that in generally the alignment of pedestrian facilities are easier than bicycle facilities because sidewalks are constructed to the outside of the curb and do not require reconstruction of the street and have minimal impact, if any, to vehicular travel. Shared use paths discussed by individuals with bicycle interest also serve the interest of pedestrians.

Sharrows were discussed. It was noted that guidance for the use of sharrows was included in the January 2010 release of the new Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and that a brief discussion of sharrows will be included in the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. Ms. Dang noted that at this time she and Public Works cannot yet recommend the use of sharrows in Harrisonburg. Ms. Dang has inquired with Arlington and Alexandria on the maintenance requirements and costs of sharrows as they may require more maintenance than bicycle lane markings because vehicle tires would frequently run over the sharrows. However, Arlington and Alexandria have a limited trial of sharrow markings and have not had the sharrows long enough to provide good estimates or information at this time. Mr. Wyse suggested that Denver, CO be called for maintenance information.

The S. Main St. median project was discussed. It was noted that this project is a partnership of James Madison University and the City. The project proposes to construct new landscaped medians within the existing center turn lane, and allow breaks in the median for left turn lanes at certain intersections. The wide outer curb lane for bicycles would be maintained, but there is not enough cross section to accommodate new bicycle lanes. It is also believed that the landscaped medians will act as a traffic

calming measure between Port Republic Rd. and Cantrell Ave. causing motorists to drive closer to 25 mph rather than over 35 mph. Slower traffic would improve safety for bicyclists.

Ms. Dang was reminded to add traffic calming as a topic in the Plan, as it improves safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.

### 3. Next Steps/Timeline

Ms. Dang suggested that the next meeting for the Committee be a joint meeting with the Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee, which meets quarterly. The next meeting will be on February 1. Committee members reviewed the draft agenda provided for the February 1 meeting. No changes or additions were recommended.

Ms. Dang requested that Committee members review the draft and submit comments by January 20. Ms. Dang will update the draft and post a copy on the City's bike/ped webpage, [www.harrisonburgva.gov/bikeped](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/bikeped) for the public to review prior to the February 1 meeting.

Although the Plan is 95% completed, and will be completed within the next month, Ms. Dang suggested that the Plan not be presented to Planning Commission until May 2010. This will allow the opportunity for any comments collected during the Comprehensive Plan public input process to be integrated into the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan if needed. This would put the presentation and adoption of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan by City Council in June 2010. Members of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Advisory Committee are encouraged to attend both Planning Commission & City Council meetings to support the plan.

Mr. Fletcher provided additional information about the Comprehensive Plan update and noted that he anticipates public input to begin around end of March 2010.

4. Meeting Adjourned at 6:30pm.
  - a. Next meeting February 1, 2010, 5:30pm, 409 S. Main St.